WAR of KINGS

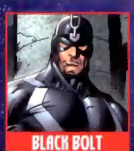
When Earth was invaded by the shape-shifting Skrulls, the Inhumans and their king Black Bolt suffered grievous wounds. They were finally pushed past the breaking point.

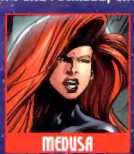
Black Bolt took control of the empire of the ancient Kree, the alien race that genetically created the Inhumans. His mission: to direct his people to take charge of their own destiny and become the peerless weapons of change and advancement that the Kree originally intended them to be.

After exiling the Empress Lilandra, the rival Shi'Ar Imperium expanded under the rule of the despotic mutant Vulcan. Like the Kree, the Shi'Ar is a mature and advanced civilization, but under its ruthless Emperor it has prospered into the largest, most powerful culture in the Galaxy. Lilandra, along with the space pirates called the Starjammers, has since found sanctuary with the Inhumans.

Vulcan saw an opportunity to annex the Kree Empire while it was in state of upheaval. During the state wedding between Crystal of the Inhuman royal family and Ronan of the Kree, a symbolic union of the two kindred races, Vulcan unleashed his Imperial Guard in a callous first strike, and sent his war fleets to invade Kree space. Reeling from this savage attack, in which many Kree colony worlds were annihilated by nega-bombs, the Inhumans realized they were obliged to fight and overcome the Shi'Ar before any of their schemes of destiny could be achieved.

Their first retaliations were swift and ruthless, and incensed Emperor Vulcan—who has taken Lilandra captive!


BLACK BOLT


MEDUSA

CRYSTAL

GORGON

KARNAK

TRITON

MAXIMUS

RONAN

LILANDRA

VULCAN

GLADIATOR

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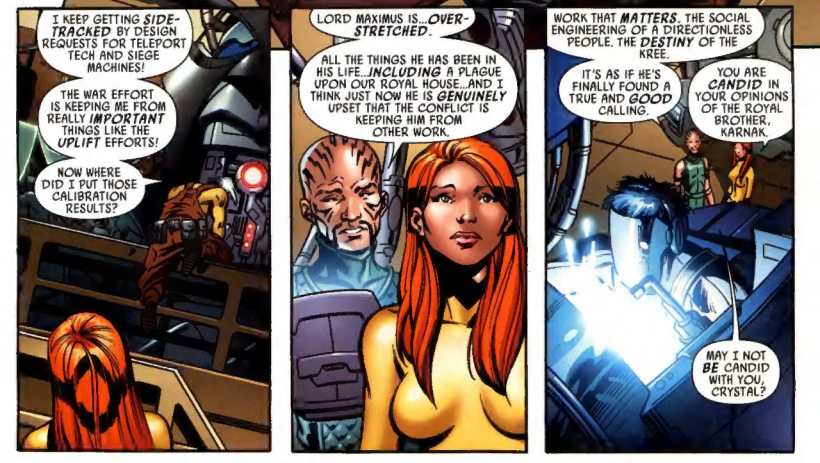
BUT MOMENTUM IS ALREADY SLOWING, FASTER THAN I PREDICTED.
EMPEROR VULCAN IS TOO IMPETUOUS AND CAVALIER IN HIS TACTICS. HE PRESSES URGENTLY AND OVER-EXTENDS.
HE IS HEAVY-HANDED.
AND THE INHUMANS ARE PROVING TO BE EVERY BIT THE MILITARY ELITE THE WHISPERS SUGGESTED.
THE KREE ARE FIGHTING WITH A GREATER STRATEGIC TENACITY THAN IN ANY CONFLICT I'VE SEEN IN THE LAST SIXTEEN DECADES.
INHUMAN LEADERSHIP IS STRONG, INSPIRATIONAL, AND VERY FOCUSED. WE HAVE LOST THE SECOND BATTLEGROUP AT RADIUS EIGHTEEN.
BATTLEGROUP EIGHT HAS BEEN HALTED AT NACEXSA. BATTLEGROUP NINE'S GROUND FORCES ARE LOCKED IN A LAND WAR ON 66 BETA TAU...
"...FLEET TASKFORCE WOLFSPIDER HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY BLOCKED BY KREE NAVY SQUADRONS IN THE GULF OF SARENTA.
"HEAVY FIGHTING CONTINUES IN THAT REGION, AND AROUND ZABEL'S STAR...

...SO...THAT'S SOME GOOD NEWS, YOU SEE?
I WISH THERE WAS MORE.
HALA, THE KREE HOMEWORLD.
THE SHI'AR STILL HAVE THE UPPER HAND, OF COURSE, AND THE ADVANTAGE OF SHEER NUMBERS.
BUT THIS WAR IS FAR FROM OVER, ACCUSER.
SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE KREE, CRYSTAL OF ATTILAN.
I'M NOT--
PARDON ME, SIR. I AM HONORED BY THE COMPLIMENT.
TELL ME SOMETHING.
IN ALL THE CHAOS THERE, ON THE GON-KET GLACIER, WERE WE...
...WERE WE ACTUALLY MARRIED?
I BELIEVE THE HIGH PRIESTS OF PAMA CONSIDER THE RITUAL TO HAVE BEEN LEGALLY COMPLETED.
I CERTAINLY DO.
I HEAR YOU HAVE BEEN MOST SUPPORTIVE OF THE COMMON KREE THESE LAST FEW DAYS.
I HAVE DONE WHAT LITTLE I CAN TO EASE THEIR PLIGHT. WAR ALWAYS AFFLICTS THE POOR MOST OF ALL.
"LITTLE" YOU SAY. FROM WHAT I HAVE BEEN TOLD, IT'S A GOOD DEAL MORE THAN OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY.
LADY, I HAVE HEARD NOTHING ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF THE UPLIFT PROGRAM. HAS WORK THERE STALLED?
I...
...I DO NOT KNOW. I WILL ENQUIRE WHEN I RETURN TO ATTILAN AND UPDATE YOU ON MY NEXT VISIT.
OF ALL THE KREE, RONAN SAW BEST HOW INHUMAN RULE COULD BENEFIT HIS RACE.

IT WAS THAT FORESIGHT THAT MADE HIM STAND ASIDE WHEN WE STRUCK AT HALA...
...THAT MADE HIM KNEEL AT BLACK BOLT'S FEET.
MORE THAN ANY OF HIS KIND, RONAN APPRECIATED THAT THE PROUD AND ANCIENT KREE CIVILIZATION WAS IN URGENT NEED OF RESCUE.
THE EMPIRE NEEDED THE DYNAMIC NEW LEADERSHIP BLACK BOLT COULD OFFER.
JUST AS THE KREE PEOPLE NEED THE VITAL BOOST OF THE UPLIFT PROGRAM TO ACCELERATE THEM OUT OF GENERATIONS OF EVOLUTIONARY STAGNATION.

OH, GREAT RANDAC! IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS TRUE, HOW AM I EVER GOING TO TELL HIM?
MAXIMUS, I NEED TO ASK YOU ABOUT THE UPLIFT PR--
DON'T! DON'T! I'M BEHIND WITH EVERYTHING!
SET-BACK AFTER SET-BACK AFTER SET-BACK!
IT'S THIS WAR. IT'S THIS DAMN WAR!
THE ROYAL CITY OF ATTILAN.


THE CHAMBER OF DEVICES.
I KEEP GETTING SIDE-TRACKED BY DESIGN REQUESTS FOR TELEPORT TECH AND SIEGE MACHINES!
THE WAR EFFORT IS KEEPING ME FROM REALLY IMPORTANT THINGS LIKE THE UPLIFT EFFORTS!
NOW WHERE DID I PUT THOSE CALIBRATION RESULTS?
LORD MAXIMUS IS...OVER-STRETCHED.
ALL THE THINGS HE HAS BEEN IN HIS LIFE...INCLUDING A PLAGUE UPON OUR ROYAL HOUSE...AND I THINK JUST NOW HE IS GENUINELY UPSET THAT THE CONFLICT IS KEEPING HIM FROM OTHER WORK.
WORK THAT MATTERS. THE SOCIAL ENGINEERING OF A DIRECTIONLESS PEOPLE. THE DESTINY OF THE KREE.
IT'S AS IF HE'S FINALLY FOUND A TRUE AND GOOD CALLING.
YOU ARE CANDID IN YOUR OPINIONS OF THE ROYAL BROTHER, KARNAK.
MAY I NOT BE CANDID WITH YOU, CRYSTAL?

ALWAYS. IS THE UPLIFT PROGRAM WORKING?
NO. EVEN BEFORE MAXIMUS WAS FORCED TO SUSPEND WORK ON IT TO FOCUS ON THE WAR EFFORT, IT WAS FAILING.
ALL THE TEST SUBJECTS PROVED IMMUNE TO THE EFFECTS OF THE TERRIGEN.
SO WHAT BECOMES OF THE KREE NOW?

SAY HELLO TO MY LITTLE FRIEND.

THE PRAETOR'S DOWN! IMPERIAL GUARD, MOVE!
REPEL INSURGENTS!
COME AT ELECTRON WITH A METAL SWORD, TRAITOR?
ARE THE LAWS OF MAGNETISM A MYSTERY TO YOU?
UGHHH!
A-ACTUALLY, ELECTRON, YOU'RE WHY WE BROUGHT A BIG STICK!
I AM GROOT!
KRA-DOOM

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